



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

FICHTE'S RELIGIONSPHILOSOPHIE IM RAHMEN DER PHILOSOPHISCHEN GESAMMENTWICKLUNG FICHTE'S. EMANUEL HIRSCH. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen. 1915. Pp. 130.

This brochure seems to be a Doctor's thesis, which seeks to release Fichte's thoughts on religion from his general philosophy. The author, with German thoroughness, has searched out every idea and word in Fichte's collected works, and endeavored to exhibit his religious beliefs in their unity and continuity as well as in their interrelation with Fichte's changing systematic construction.

Dr. Hirsch finds that it was an independent speculative development which conducted Fichte's thought to its religio-philosophical counsel respecting a blessed life. He urges that we may apprehend this development in its full peculiarity if, leaving on one side all confusing and contingent particulars, we confine attention to its cardinal "moments." Fichte's principle and starting-point is the evidence, the certainty, which the ego wins in and of itself through the deed (*Tat*) of moral conviction. On this basis, on which firmly stands his speculation, he undertakes to comprehend the whole world out of the pure ego, which realizes self-certainty even against contradiction. This undertaking fails. Because self-affirmation of the ego is strictly apprehended as moral, it involves the affirmation of communion; and on this rock of fellowship-thoughts the syntheses break which have been construed on the grounds of the philosophy of the pure ego. Whoever affirms communion affirms God.

It is the self-affirmation of the moral ego which has ultimately led to the affirmation of God. Fichte's philosophy is philosophy of the ego; not, however, of the ego which realizes its self-certainty in the face of *Anstoss*, but of the ego which, surrendering itself to God, has realized the life and existence of God, and therefore can completely understand and possess itself only in case it understands the evidence accompanying life as that of the divine life itself. Thus our author thinks that the Fichteian speculative system of pure moralism can be maintained in opposition to annihilation which threatens it from the thought of communion, only by becoming a speculative doctrine of God. This, he says, is the secret of the philosophical development of Fichte.

The imposing unity and consistency of this development is due to the fact that it remained uninfluenced by all non-ethical and non-speculative interests, especially by all interests of a religious kind. As a speculative philosopher, Fichte did not presuppose belief in God, did not in fact really seek it; he found it. His conviction grew that only thought itself could free us from the needs and

extremities which thought had engendered. Dr. Hirsch thinks that the immanent self-criticism of every purely ethical *Weltanschauung* has been consummated in Fichte's philosophical development. The systematic value of this self-criticism is all the greater by virtue of its having taken place within the sphere of ethical idealism. The refutation of ethical idealism by appealing to the fact of universal sinfulness, was remote from Fichte, who never acknowledged that this fact was inevitable. But our author contends that he who cannot ignore the fact of universal sinfulness must evaluate the religious position which Fichte achieved, as untenable.

Dr. Hirsch has scrutinized Fichte's works in a painstaking manner. He has gathered the data exhaustively, and much that he says is illuminating. But—so it seems to this reviewer—his critical approach is faulty. All modern thought inherited an uncriticised *a priori* basis of experience; that is, an experience-less basis of experience. There has been a progressive reduction of this basis through our modern centuries. We have at length accepted frankly the task of demonstrating the complete experiential origin of the *a priori* element, by whatever name it be called. Now, what of the traditional *a priori* element did Fichte retain? What peculiar form did it take in his system? What contribution did he make to the historic transition to an exclusively experiential basis of experience, and what in this line did he bequeath as task to those who came after him? These questions indicate the method of treating the subject from the point of view of modern philosophical criticism. But Hirsch is a German; and it seems that, whether in philosophical system or in social structure, the German is definitively committed to an *a priori*, that is, an absolute of some kind.

GEORGE BURMAN FOSTER.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO.

THE PROBLEM OF KNOWLEDGE. DOUGLAS CLYDE MACINTOSH, Ph.D.
The Macmillan Co. 1915. Pp. xviii, 503. \$2.50.

“The method of idealistic epistemology is like that of the quack physician; it first administers a drug which makes the patient's ailment chronic, thus making its own further services permanently indispensable.” Even the idealists will have to admit some plausibility in this charge of Professor Macintosh in his very important book. For when the idealistic philosopher has introduced the neophyte into his wonderland, or put him through Alice's looking-